

Influence of Learners' Readiness and Physical Facilities on Transition of Learners with Visual Impairment from Integrated Pre-primary to Primary Schools in Narok County, Kenya

Original Research Article

ABSTRACT

Transition of pre-primary learners with visual impairment from integrated pre-primary to primary schools in Narok County has been low. Thus, the study assessed school dynamics influencing transition of learners with visual impairment from integrated pre-primary to primary schools in Narok County, Kenya. The study was based on the Ecological Systems Theory and Transition Theory. The study employed mixed methods approach and in turn used concurrent triangulation research design. The target population consisted of 16 headteachers, 3 Educational Assessment and Resource Centre (EARC) officers and 208 teachers and 160 learners with visual impairment all totalling to 387. The study adopted the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample size determination formula where a sample size of 266 respondents was sampled. The study used purposive and stratified sampling method to select the sample. 15 headteachers and three EARC Officers were sampled using purposive sampling. Stratified random sampling method was used to select 135 teachers while 113 learners were selected using simple random sampling. Questionnaires were used to collect data from teachers, interview guides were used to collect data from headteachers and EARC Officers while an observation checklist was used to collect data from the learners. Pilot testing of the instrument was done on 2 headteachers, one EARC officer, 12 teachers and 5 learners with visual impairment from the neighbouring Bomet County. Validity was established through expert judgement. Reliability was established using test re-test technique and reliability index, $r = 0.867$ was determined using Cronbach Alpha Method. The study established that learners' readiness and physical facilities influence transition of learners with visual impairment from integrated pre-primary to primary schools. The study recommends that Ministry of Education should redesign the teacher training curriculum to encompass components of special needs education to equip them with skills to handle and teach learners in integrated school microsystems. I would recommend that Ministry of Education should also allocate more funds to schools to enable the school management to provide adequate, but suitable physical facilities for learners with visual impairment.

Keywords: *Visual impairment; pre-primary; learners' readiness; learners with visual impairment; physical facilities.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Evidence from studies worldwide has proved that economic engagement of human capital through formal education is a fundamental factor in stabilizing the economy, prosperity and reduces poverty. Education diminishes social and economic inequality as it gives every person equal opportunity to explore the available resources [1]. It is partly for this reason that increasing numbers of young children with visual

impairment are being cared for in early childhood settings in most communities. Recent knowledge about the loss of potential intellectual development during the formative years has pointed to the importance of targeting young children in order to increase later developmental and educational outcomes [2]. According to [3], engaging children with visual impairment in regular classrooms has broadened the range of ability represented in groups of young children. However, the topic of children with visual impairment transferring from integrated pre-

primary to primary school as an issue of educational practice remains a research topic within the context of pedagogic discussions. This is because, while it is important to ensure that learners with visual impairments transfer smoothly from integrated to normal classrooms, certain school characteristics impede this process, restricting their future development and educational results.

The subject of children's transition is not new. However, the word transition lacks a precise definition. There have been different definitions of transition by various scholars; [4] defined transition as the progression of learners from one level of education to the next. According to [5], the movement from one level to the next is affected by factors such as: performance in exams, affordability and availability of space in the next level institution.

[6], defines transition by comparing quantitative indicators from different countries rates of special needs students thus making it very difficult to clearly conceptualize the transition rates in a country. Dunlop and Fabian [7] define transition as "being the passage from one place, stage, state, style or subject to another over time." Related in a very particular way, transition in pre-school education is explained as the period between the first entry to an educational setting for learning purposes and the final exit [7]. Educational transition refers to the transformation where children go from one stage or phase of education to the next over time. As early as 1852, a renowned philosopher and researcher, Friedrich Froebel designed a detailed system-like structure associating pre-school with primary school education. This became the groundwork for many scholars to discuss the concern of discontinuity in education and how to handle the gap in class level transition. Moreover, since 1960s, many European countries believed that learners' transition from pre-school to primary education was determined by the need to offer and implement a unified curriculum. The curriculum had been introduced to encompass both kindergarten and primary schools across the larger Europe [7].

Scholars have placed focus on determining various variables involved in this process which contribute to the current knowledge and understanding of the topic across the globe. There are potential effects this change can have in the preschoolers' transition into first grade as shown empirically in a variety of domains such as social, cognitive and emotional [8]. Research

has also emphasized the important role a smooth transition plays in the children's later academic life in primary school [1]. Learners in preschools who have a smooth transition to first grade can have positive long-term effects in academic performance and personal development of the child as studies have shown [9]. Early childhood transitions are very important since they set the stage for all future transitions.

1.1 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to assess the influence of learners' readiness and physical facilities on transition of learners with visual impairment from integrated pre-primary to primary schools in Narok County, Kenya.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The study was guided by the following objectives: -

1. To establish the influence of learners' readiness on transition of learners with visual impairment from integrated pre-primary to primary schools in Narok County, Kenya.
2. To examine the influence of physical facilities on transition of learners with visual impairment from integrated pre-primary to primary schools in Narok County, Kenya

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Learners' Readiness and Transition of Learners with Visual Impairment

The preparedness of learners indicates the many elements of early learning and schooling. Many academics and educationists have proposed many definitions of school ready, particularly in recent years. For example, [10] defined school readiness as a child's degree of maturity as directly established by chronological development and intrinsic traits. This usually causes the students to be quiet and focused on their task, which is a key indication of school readiness. However, there are emerging views on school readiness that emphasize the involvement of families, schools and communities in the learner's preparedness to participate in a number of developmental domains.

[11] Conducted a study of Italian pre-primary schools and claims that the features of learner preparation for early childhood education empirically demonstrate improved abilities utilized in transitioning to pre-primary learners

with visual impairment when they begin school. Given that children with visual impairment are mainly reliant on others rather than themselves, the current research took a step further to examine the elements of preparedness. As a component that is primarily influenced by the external environment rather than the internal environment, it is critical that they be studied owing to their level of impact. Although the majority of pre-primary learners with visual impairment will have had some sort of early childhood experience, some pre-primary learners with visual impairment may have missed out on attending a pre-school for a variety of reasons. This suggests that they may have missed out on opportunities to interact and develop confidence in a school setting. In other words, pre-primary students with vision impairments who have had limited early childhood experiences are more likely to have difficulties in the school setting.

2.2 Availability of Physical Facilities and Transition of Learners with Visual Impairment

Physical facilities have been discovered to be a dominant aspect in quantitative instruction. Among them are classrooms, lecture halls, auditoriums, administration buildings, libraries, labs, workshops, play grounds, resource centers, and furniture.

[12] Carried out a research to evaluate teachers' perceptions on Special Education Classroom Infrastructure. This research was carried out to investigate the appropriateness of school physical infrastructure and the integration of special education programs throughout the nation. The research concentrated on the size of the classroom, its location, the number of pupils and instructors that might be present at the same time and its infrastructure. The research concluded that education still requires significant improvement and that classroom changes should be carried out in accordance with a recognized standard. Such a research has not been done to evaluate the physical amenities in preschools, much alone to address the situation of visually impaired students. As a result, the present research aimed to address this vacuum by investigating how physical amenities affect the transition process.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The mixed methodological approach was adopted in this study, which comprised both quantitative

and qualitative approaches, where a descriptive survey technique was used since it aims to determine what is happening right now. Its aim is to learn more about the participants' ideas and opinions in the research.

3.1 Location of Study

The study was carried out in Narok County in Kenya. Narok County is divided into six educational divisions: Osupuko, Transmara West, Loita, Transmara East, Ololulunga, Mulot and Mao Central. The main respondents were Education Assessment and Resource Center Officers (EARC Officers), headteachers, teachers and learners with visual impairment.

A sample of 266 respondents was achieved using Krejcie and Morgan formula [13]. Where 15 headteachers, 135 were teachers, 3 EARC officers and 113 learners. An observation checklist, an interview guide, and questionnaires were tools that were used to collect the data from respondents and a pilot test was done prior to the study to ensure that the objectives were fully achieved.

4. RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Influence of Learners' Readiness on Transition of Learners with Visual Impairment from Integrated Pre-primary to Primary Schools

The descriptive statistics on the influence of learners' readiness on transition of learners with visual impairment was collected from teachers and represented in Table 2.

Table 1 shows that majority of the respondents 42(32.6%) indicated social competence as a characteristic of readiness of the pre-primary learner to transit to primary level. A significantly high portion of the respondents 17(13.2%) indicated pre-primary learners' ability to explore while fewer 31(24.0%) indicated communication skills characteristics as a measure of the transition readiness among the learners. Mobility and orientation were also a characteristic of readiness at 39(30.2%). Similar views were expressed by the headteachers and EARC Officers. This implies that from the teacher's assessment, a good percentage of the learners with VI are usually not ready for transition on the four fronts that were being tested. This affects the learners' ability to cope in the new environment. These findings corroborate with the findings of a study carried by [14] which established that the characteristics of a learner's

readiness for early childhood education empirically illustrates developed skills used in transitioning to pre-primary learners with visual impairment when starting school.

From Table 2 it indicates that most of the teachers indicated that readiness of learners with visual impairment to transition from integrated pre-primary to primary schools was average with a total count of 77(59.7%) while 38(29.5%)

indicated that they were not ready and 14(10.9%) were undecided. This was tabulated as in Table 3 below; From Table 2, it is clear that the rate at which the teachers indicated the readiness of learners with VI to transition from integrated pre-primary to primary schools was high with 59.7%. This implies that if the learners are given an enabling environment, transition is achievable.

Table 1. Aspects of Readiness of Learners with Visual Impairment for Transition

		Count	Column N %
Aspect of readiness which you often consider when transitioning learners with visual impairment from integrated pre-primary to primary schools	Orientation and mobility	39	30.2%
	Social competence	42	32.6%
	Ability for exploration	17	13.2%
	Communication skills	31	24.0%

Table 2. The rate of readiness of learners with visual impairment to transition from integrated pre-primary to primary schools

		Count	Column N %
Rate levels of readiness of learners with visual impairment who transit from integrated pre-primary to primary schools	Ready (3)	77	59.70%
	Not ready (2)	38	29.50%
	Not sure (1)	14	10.90%

Table 3. Views of the Teachers on the Influence of Learners' Readiness on Transition from Integrated pre-primary to primary Schools

	SD		D		U		A		SA	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Physical readiness influence transition of learners from integrated pre-primary to primary schools	19	14.0	16	11.6	6	4.7	21	15.5	73	54.3
Manifesting social competence enables learners to transit from integrated pre-primary to primary schools	7	5.4	13	9.3	3	2.3	31	23.3	81	59.7
Learners with ability for exploration do not easily transit from integrated pre-primary to primary schools	36	26.4	11	8.5	5	3.9	21	15.5	62	45.7
Learners with ability for exploration easily transit from integrated pre-primary to primary schools	71	52.7	11	7.8	3	2.3	20	14.7	30	22.5
Learners with developed basic literacy skills find it difficult to transit from integrated pre-primary to primary schools	43	31.8	42	31.0	7	5.4	29	21.7	13	10.1

Table 4. Availability of Physical Facilities in primary Schools

Items	Number of Teachers	
	F	%
Modified desks	30	25.0
Modified chairs	27	22.5
Classrooms	49	40.5
Resource centers	43	35.5
Play materials	60	50.0
Pavements/Ramps	37	30.5

Table 3 shows that a majority, 73(54.3%), of the teachers strongly agreed that physical readiness influences the transition of learners from integrated pre-primary to primary schools. It is also noted that 21(15.5%) of the teachers agreed. However, only a paltry 6(4.7%) of the teachers were undecided, 16(11.6%) of the teachers disagreed, whereas 19(14.0%) of the teachers strongly disagreed. The results indicate that the physical readiness of the learners influences the rate of transition from integrated pre-primary to integrated primary school. This has implications on the current transition rates of learners from integrated pre-primary to primary schools. This agreed with the findings of Dunlop and Fabian [7]. They indicated that physical readiness is an essential aspect for the transition of learners from one level of education to the next. The study revealed that 81(59.7%) of the teachers strongly agreed that Manifesting social competence enables learners to transit from integrated pre-primary to primary schools. 31(23.3%) of the teachers agreed. However, 3(2.3%) of the teachers were undecided, 13(9.4%) of the teachers disagreed, whereas 7(5.4%) of the teachers strongly disagreed. This indicates that it is easy for learners who can explore to transition from one level of learning to the next than those who have no power for exploration. This agrees with the findings of UNICEF (2012), which indicated that the physical environment is essential in enhancing the ability of exploration that is very important in strengthening transition from the integrated pre-primary to primary school.

Most of the teachers, 62(45.5%), strongly agreed with the view that learners with the ability for exploration easily transit from integrated pre-primary to primary schools. 21(15.5%) agreed. At the same time, 5(3.9%) of the teachers were undecided, 11(8.5%) of the teachers disagreed, whereas 35(26.4%) of the teachers strongly disagreed. This indicates that learners with the ability for exploration easily transition from one level of learning to the next, including the transition from integrated pre-primary to primary schools.

It was found out that learners with ability for exploration easily transition from integrated pre-primary to primary schools where over half of the 135 total respondents strongly disagreed where 71(52.7%) strongly disagreed, 11(7.8%) of the total respondents disagreed while 3(2.3%) of the respondents were actually undecided 20(14.7%) of the respondents agreed while 30(22.5%) of respondents agreed with these issues.

The study also found out that 13(10.1%) of the teachers strongly agreed with the view that learners with developed basic literacy skills find it difficult to transition from integrated pre-primary to primary schools. 29(21.7%) of the teachers agreed. At the same time, 7(5.4%) of the teachers were undecided, 42(31.0%) of the teachers disagreed whereas 43(31.8%) of the teachers strongly disagreed. When learners develop the basic literacy skill this is a very huge advantage towards the transition from integrated pre-primary to primary schools where 69(45.9%) agreed while 7(5.1%) strongly agreed and this is a huge benefit to the learner. Some of the respondent noted that transition of learners is not only influenced by the development of basic literacy skills where 14(10.4%) and 13(9.6%) disagreed and totally disagreed. This shows that it should be considered as one of the main dynamics to be considered during the transition process.

The headteachers and EARC Officers were also interviewed on the extent to which learners' readiness influence transition of learners with visual impairment from integrated pre-primary to primary schools. During the interviews, the headteachers were asked to show characteristics that the learners must depict for transition from integrated pre-primary to primary schools. The interviewees indicated a variety of characteristics shown by the learners to depict readiness for transition. A number of respondents were of the view that the physical readiness was key for readiness of the learners on transition. The interviewees explained and elaborated that the physical size and behaviours was always observed and assessed to ascertain the readiness for transition among the learners. Headteacher, H5, said;

While it is key to point at certain academic capabilities of the learners for transition, the physical size of the learner is also considered in the assessment and evaluation for the learners' transition from integrated pre-primary to primary school levels.

In relation to the question of assessing readiness of the learners to transit, the interviews with headteachers and the EARC officers conformed to responses from the interviewee above (the headteacher). The primary teachers indicated that the physical readiness of the learners played a significant role in transition, as it was necessary to categorize the learners according to their age group for easier socialization process

that also enhanced effectiveness in teaching and learning.

4.2 Influence of Physical Facilities on Transition from Integrated pre-primary to primary Schools

The descriptive statistics on the influence of physical facilities on transition of learners with visual impairment was collected from teachers and represented in Table 4.

Table 4 shows that only a quarter, 30(25.0) of the teachers indicated that modified desks are available, 27(22.5) indicated that modified chairs are available, 49(40.5) indicated that classrooms are available, 43(35.5) indicated that resource centres are available in primary schools. However, half, 60(50.0) of the teachers indicated that play materials for learners with visual impairment are available whereas only 37(30.5) indicated that pavements/ramps have been designed to accommodate learners with visual impairment. The results indicated that most of the integrated schools lacked the necessary physical facilities to enhance learning and hence transition of the learners. These findings are in agreement with the assertions of Ramadurai [15] who noted that to promote education for the visually impaired in India, there have been more inventive ways such as the introduction of mobile schools for the blind commonly referred to as Braille without border.

Table 5 shows that 82(60.5%) of the teachers strongly agreed with the opinion that many primary schools have not adapted their physical facilities such as modified desks and chairs to enhance the learning of children with a visual impairment from integrated pre-primary to primary schools. In comparison, 13(9.3%) of the teachers agreed. However, only a paltry 3(2.3%) of the teachers were undecided, 7(5.4%) of teachers disagreed, while 30(22.5%) of the teachers strongly disagreed. Most of the respondents agreed with the statement indicating that both integrated pre-primary and primary schools lacked the necessary physical facilities to support the transition of the learners with visual impairment. The results reveal that there were few schools with the required physical facilities and hence the low rate of transition was a reflection of this lack of physical facilities. The study revealed that 78(58.1%) of the teachers strongly agreed that, in many integrated pre-primary schools, classrooms have a large number of learners to influence the transition of

learners with a visual impairment from integrated pre-primary to primary schools. 15(10.9%) of the teachers agreed. However, 5(3.9%) of the teachers were undecided, 16(11.6%) of the teachers disagreed, whereas 21(15.5%) of the teachers strongly disagreed. The response shows that teachers in primary schools could not pay attention to the needs of the learners with VI as the classes were significant compared to the small types at the pre-primary level. This agrees with the findings of [16], who indicated that schools that do not have appropriate physical facilities are not prepared for visually impaired children.

This credits the fact that play helps learners who are differently able to interact with others, develop their other skills, enhance their abilities and give them the confidence to move on to the next grade. Besides, having appropriate play materials at all levels of learning enhances the transition of learners from one level of education to the next. The majority, 91(67.4%), of the teachers strongly agreed that the physical environment, e.g., ramps and pavements, is instrumental in the transition process from integrated pre-primary to primary schools. 31(23.3%) of the teachers agreed. In the same breath, 3(2.3%) of the teachers were undecided, 6(3.9%) of the teachers disagreed, whereas 4(3.1%) of the teachers strongly disagreed. This agrees with the findings of [17] who indicated that physical facilities and play activities have a direct influence on the transition of the learners from integrated pre-primary to primary schools. This was highly supported by the participants with 58(43.0%) and 19(14.1%) who strongly agreed an indication that they play a great role during the transition process.

When the learners socialize during play, it influences transition from integrated pre-primary to primary schools. 59(43.7%) agreed, 14(10.4%) strongly agreed, 29(21.5%) were undecided, 26(19.3%) disagreed while 7(5.2%) of respondents strongly disagreed. This confirms that play is necessary for young learners during the transition process.

To verify the relationship between physical facilities and transition from integrated pre-primary to primary schools, data were further collected on class size and the transition of learners with VI to grade one in primary schools. The results are shown in Table 6.

Table 5. Views of teachers on the influence of physical facilities on transition of learners with VI from integrated pre-primary to primary Schools

Test Item	SD		D		U		A		SA	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Many primary schools have not adapted their physical facilities like modified desks and chairs to enhance the learning of children with visual impairment from integrated pre-primary to primary schools	30	22.5	7	5.4	3	2.3	13	9.3	82	60.5
In many pre-primary schools, classrooms have a small number of learners to enhance transition of learners with visual impairment from integrated pre-primary to primary schools	21	15.5	16	11.6	5	3.9	15	10.9	78	58.1
In pre-primary schools, playing fields and play materials that have been adapted for learners with visual impairment as a way of enhancing outdoor activities from integrated pre-primary to primary schools	72	53.5	15	10.9	6	4.7	11	7.8	31	23.3
Physical environment e.g. ramps and pavements and resource centres are instrumental in transition from integrated pre-primary to primary schools	4	3.1	6	3.9	3	2.3	31	23.3	91	67.4
Play materials have not been adapted for learners with visual impairment to enhance outdoor activities in integrated pre-primary and primary schools	5	3.7	23	17.0	30	22.2	58	43.0	19	14.1
The ramps in the integrated schools are instrumental in enhancing transition of learners with VI from integrated pre-primary to primary schools	10	7.4	24	17.8	30	22.2	63	46.7	7	5.2

Table 6. Results of the physical facilities and the transition of learners with VI to grade one in primary Schools from integrated pre-primary schools

Physical facilities	Transition of Learners with VI to Grade One
Size of the classes	43
Toilets/Latrines	61
Playgrounds	82
Ramps	38
Colored pavements	40

The results in Table 6 show that the rate of transition of learners with VI from pre-primary to primary schools which had large class sizes was very low with a transition rate of 43. This implies that the size of the class in an integrated school with learners with VI influences the transition of these learners to grade one. This might be attributed to the level of teacher/learner attention which is important in the performance of the learners and hence influence transition. This implies that class size has an influence on the transition rate of the learners. The result further indicates that toilets/ latrines and the playground might not to a great extent influence transition rates given that their influence was given as 61 and 82. Ramps and colored pavements at 38 and 40 indicates that low transition rates are as a result of inadequacy of the resources. This should be dynamics which should be considered in order to enhance the transition of learners with VI. This implies that though physical facilities were important in schools, their influence on transition is negligible and that is why the findings show that most respondents still felt that there were higher numbers of learners with VI transitioning to grade one.

The interviewees' comments revealed that a variety of physical facilities played a role in improving the learner's transition. While most pointed at facilities that are play based, some respondents noted that other unique physical facilities that are configured to adaptation by learners with visual impairment were critical. In one statement, an interviewee indicated that mobility devices were necessary for installation in various play and classroom areas. EARC Officer, EARC05, said.

The pre-primary learners with visual impairment enjoy the access to a variety of reading materials and hence develops skills for proficiency in use of information. This forms the unique level of professional staffing that has informed school librarians on their vital role of supporting the curriculum as well as enhancing reading literacy. However, having a well-stocked library is not in itself a means to educational outcomes without effective pedagogy. The teachers have been on course to support the available physical resources for effective learning outcomes that are geared towards transition among the pre-primary school learners with visual impairment.

The statement relates to the call out of earlier studies that recommend the importance on provision of unique physical facilities for pre-primary school for learners with visual

impairment. For instance, Avery [18] surveyed Scotland libraries involving 113 respondents about Library and Literacy Action Plan. The study reported that there exists a range of library models serving the Scotland community education. The survey found out that almost all pre-primary and primary schools offer library services in whichever form. This conforms to the revelations of the interviewees through recognition that the role of physical facilities for transition of learners with visual impairment in pre-primary schools. In another interview with the head teachers, it was clear that there is need to consider the unique requirements of the physical facilities that would enhance the transition of the learners with visual impairment from pre-primary to primary schools. The headteachers indicated that it is important to provide physical facilities as they support in learners' growth that helps them put on physical strength, coordination and balance. The play physical facilities also provide chances for pre-primary learners with visual impairment to learn social skills, develop imagination and strengthen creativity, which, in the long-run, prepares them for transitions. The findings conform to the statement of the expressions of the Australian Government [19] in a study about availability of play materials. The survey emphasized that play is important for the cognitive development of learners. Similarly, a study conducted in Moscow amongst 119 respondents about Effectiveness of Play on Learners Development by Rodriguez and Peterson [20] showed that physical facilities encouraged social and cognitive development among the learners with visual impairment hence enhancing transition to primary school.

5. DISCUSSION

5.1 Discussion on the Influence of Learners' Readiness on Transition of Learners with Visual Impairment from Integrated Pre-primary to Primary Schools

The study, indicated that majority of the respondents felt that the levels of readiness of learners with VI remain very low among the pre-primary learners transitioning from integrated pre-primary to integrated primary schools. This was seen through poor orientation, low social competence, inability for exploration and above all poor communicative competencies which are necessary for adjustment in new school settings after undergoing transition. This was highly influenced by the learners with poor orientation

with a high correlation of 0.251 followed by learners with ability for exploration with 0.250 correlation. Similarly, there was lower coefficient influenced by manifesting social competence which enables learners to transition from integrated pre-primary to primary schools. These findings attest to the fact that readiness is a key ingredient to transition of learners with visual impairment. Learners who are well prepared will not have challenges pertaining to such competencies as socialization, communication and explore other learning skills, knowledge and even change of attitudes towards enabling the same learner to move to primary schools. In other words, the ability of a learner to effectively transition from integrated pre-primary to a primary school depends largely, on the ability of the learner to develop relevant skills such as social competence, exploration, positive orientation and mobility and above all, communication skills.

5.2 Discussion on the Influence of Physical Facilities on Transition from Integrated Pre-primary to Primary Schools

Please check highlighted Table no.

Analysis indicates that play materials are very essential in physical facilities on transition from integrated pre-primary to primary schools since their corresponding percentage was 50.0%, followed by classrooms since this is where the knowledge is passed with 40.5% of total respondents this was represented in (Table 26). The study also established that majority of the respondents agreed that physical facilities are very important in enhancing the transition of learners from integrated pre-primary to integrated primary schools. Schools that have adapted effective physical facilities are in a position to enhance smooth transition of learners with VI from integrated pre-primary to primary schools. This could be as a result of teachers having enough time to deal with other development issues of the child that are required for effective transition. These include, but not limited to, lack of modified desks, modified chairs, conducive classrooms, resource centers, play materials and disability-friendly pavements as far as visual impairment is concerned. This indicates that the greatest hindrance to smooth transition of learners with visual impairment is lack or inadequacy of adapted physical facilities. In other words, transition from integrated pre-primary to primary schools is made difficult for most learners as most integrated primary schools lack the appropriate physical facilities to enhance the transition process. From the regression model, it

indicated that in integrated pre-primary schools, playing fields and play materials that have been adapted for learners with visual impairment enhance outdoor activities from integrated pre-primary to primary schools. This was shown by a high correlation of 0.324. Every factor towards determination of the influence of physical facilities on transition from integrated pre-primary to primary schools had a positive correlation. Therefore, there is need for the schools to ensure they provide the required facilities and engage the learners in various activities that enable them understand their challenges and hence make the transition process effective.

6. CONCLUSION

From the study, it shows that majority of the respondents felt that the levels of readiness of learners with VI remain very low among the pre-primary learners transitioning from integrated pre-primary to integrated primary schools. This was seen through poor orientation, low social competence, inability for exploration and above all poor communicative competencies which are necessary for adjustment in new school settings after undergoing transition.

The study also established that majority of the respondents agreed that physical facilities are very important in enhancing the transition of learners from integrated pre-primary to integrated primary schools. Schools that have adapted effective physical facilities are in a position to enhance smooth transition of learners with VI from integrated pre-primary to primary schools. This could be as a result of teachers having enough time to deal with other development issues of the child that are required for effective transition. These include, but not limited to, lack of modified desks, modified chairs, conducive classrooms, resource centers, play materials and disability-friendly pavements as far as visual impairment is concerned.

7. RECOMMENDATION

The Ministry of Education should revise the teacher education curriculum to include elements of special education in order to prepare teachers to manage and instruct students in integrated school microsystems. The Ministry of Education should conduct refresher courses and workshops for teachers who are already in the classroom to train them on new pedagogical techniques and how to deal with developing challenges in teaching in relation to integrated education systems.

Policy makers and EARC Officers should encourage teachers to improvise instructional resources which can enable learners with visual impairment to acquire skills and knowledge with ease. Policy makers should formulate punitive regulations for schools which fail to adhere to the already existing laws on creating of disability-friendly school environment.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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